IMPROVING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Photo: R. Zurba

THE CHALLENGE

In southern Africa, multi-party democracy has received broad support. Democratic norms, standards and procedures are being established at both the national and regional level. Despite these positive developments, democratic values and practices remain shallowly rooted. Surveys consistently document declining public trust in governing institutions and political leadership in the region.

USAID PROGRAM

USAID promotes free, fair, and open elections in Southern Africa. Working with regional partners, USAID also strengthens judicial independence, civil society advocacy, and legislative bodies.

AFROBAROMETER SURVEYS

The Afrobarometer is an Africa-wide program of surveys that measure public attitudes on democracy, governance, electoral competition, corruption, and rule of law. USAID is supporting the current round of surveys in eight Southern African countries. Dissemination of the results gives political parties, electoral officials, and civil society organizations the information they need to lobby effectively for more transparent and competitive electoral processes.

ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVOCACY

USAID supports Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) to carry out a regional program of anti-corruption initiatives in Southern Africa. TIZ is the "Regional Desk" for Transparency International (TI). TIZ strengthens the capacity of TI National Chapters to conduct National Integrity surveys and Access to Information surveys. Broad dissemination of survey results will increase public awareness of corruption, its causes, and the consequences. TIZ trains journalists
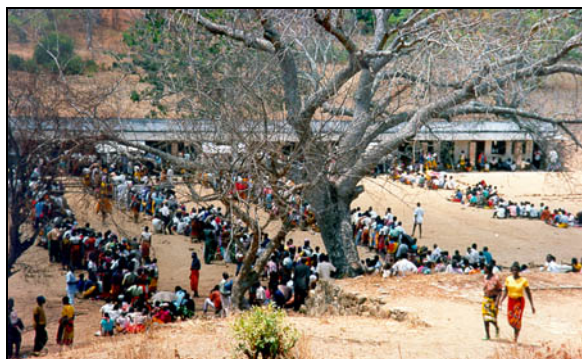
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to expose corrupt practices, thus enhancing the capacity of the media to play watchdog and whistle-blowing roles in society. Finally, the program strengthens networking and information sharing among civil society organizations that work on corruption issues.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Voters in Mozambique

USAID has supported the development and application of regional norms and standards for conducting elections. A key element of this support includes funding for election observation missions to assess whether countries are adhering to these standards. USAID is also strengthening the capacity of the region's parliamentarians to initiate and support electoral reforms that are in line with regional election norms and standards.

CONFLICT MITIGATION

USAID is strengthening the capacity of regional organizations to implement conflict mitigation initiatives. A special focus of this program is to prevent and mitigate election related conflict and human rights violations. The program also includes monitoring of regional and national trends that are likely to result in conflict.

USAID PARTNERS

SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)
Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI-Z)
Institute for Democracy in South Africa
　(IDASA)
Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI)
African Centre for the Constructive
　Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)